



PUBLIC HEALTH BYTES

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Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

Working in partnership
with the citizens of
Henrico County to create
the conditions for health.

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Communicable Diseases

Henrico Roundup: Two clusters of Erythema infectiosum, (**Fifth disease**), caused by parvovirus B19, were recently reported to Henrico Health Department. Potential complications exist for those who are immunocompromised. Parvovirus can also cross the placenta and attack fetal red blood cells. The incubation period for the infection is usually 4 to 14 days, but can be as long as 20 days after exposure.

Norovirus – No large outbreaks of norovirus have been confirmed so far this season in Henrico or the Richmond Metro area. Continue to be vigilant and report any clusters of unexplained vomiting or diarrhea among patients or staff in group settings by contacting us at 501-4522, or call (866) 531-3068 to page us for urgent issues outside of normal business hours. Recognizing clusters early is crucial in limiting disease impact. **MRSA Follow-up:** Reports of invasive Methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in Henrico have averaged 4 per month since the start of the reporting requirement (10/24/2007). As a reminder, sporadic cases of non-invasive MRSA are not reportable, although clusters of ANY illness are reportable. There is no need to complete an Epi-1 form for invasive MRSA cases when a confirmatory lab report is available. **Please continue to report invasive cases of methicillin-resistant and any vancomycin-intermediate or vancomycin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* by mailing or faxing the lab report to (804) 501-4232.** For those interested in resource materials on MRSA and disease prevention in general, the Public Health Foundation (PHF) offers resources for a fee, including posters, brochures and videos. See: <http://bookstore.phf.org/index.php?cPath=69>

Hib Vaccine recall follow-up: Merck & Co. has initiated a voluntary recall in the U.S. for 10 lots of PedvaxHIB® (Hib) and two lots of COMVAX® (Hib-Hep B). **CDC recommends that providers temporarily defer administering the routine Hib vaccine booster dose given at age 12–15 months except for children in specific groups at higher risk.**

Seasonal Influenza Corner

Virginia 2007-08 Influenza Surveillance Activity Level for Week 50 (as of 12/15/07): **Local**

Virginia is reporting “Local” influenza activity, while the surrounding states of KY, MD, NC, TN, and WV all reported “Sporadic” flu activity. See CDC’s flu surveillance data at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>. **Continue to vaccinate throughout the season.** Remember that influenza vaccination rates have been historically low in healthcare workers, including physicians. Encourage your staff to get vaccinated as a measure of patient safety. Flu activity in Virginia typically peaks in March.

Pandemic Flu - ALERT PHASE: 3

Pandemic/Avian Flu Update: Human Cases– Myanmar has confirmed the country's first case of human infection with the H5N1 avian influenza virus, while Pakistan has informed WHO of eight suspected human cases of H5N1 avian influenza that are pending confirmation by WHO’s reference laboratory. As of 12/18/07, the cumulative number of confirmed human cases of H5N1 for calendar year 2007 is 77, of which 51 have been fatal.

Web Resources

Note our new Health Department web address; www.HenricoHealth.org. Check out our resources!

Emergency Preparedness

Operation H-FIVE: On November 29th the Henrico Health Department conducted a mass influenza vaccination drill in which 167 people were inoculated. This exercise tested our ability to rapidly coordinate and execute a geographically-focused mass vaccination scenario using our Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers. Accommodating a multilingual patient population and operating during evening hours were other key goals. To view pictures from the exercise please visit www.henricohealth.org/HFIVE.htm. **MRC:** MRC orientation takes place on Jan. 15th, followed by Disaster Behavioral Health on Jan 22nd, and Strategic National Supply (SNS) Jan. 29th according to the current training schedule. For more information about the MRC call 501-4643.

Environmental

Rabies -- Rabid animals continue to be an issue in Henrico County. On 12/9/2007, a rabid raccoon was found in the 9200 block of Venetian Way. Despite a substantial public outreach campaign, we did not confirm any human exposure. Help us to emphasize the following (1) individuals (and their pets) should avoid interactions with wild animals and (2) pet owners should ensure their animals are up-to-date with all necessary immunizations. Remain vigilant about the possibility of rabies exposure in humans bitten by animals. The health department is available to assist in answering questions regarding rabies epidemiology and management including post-exposure prophylaxis in individuals with a potential animal exposure.

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